

MASTERPLANNING,  
LANDSCAPE AND  
ASSESSMENT

Bellway

STRATEGIC  
LAND

BIDWELLS

JANUARY 2026

VISION DOCUMENT

# LAND SOUTH OF BANNOLD ROAD WATERBEACH, CAMBRIDGE



Quality Assurance

**Site name:** Land South of Bannold Road, Waterbeach, Cambridge

**Client name:** Bellway

**Type of report:** Vision Study



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# CONTENTS

## **01. Introduction**

- 1.1 Site Location
- 1.2 Site Context
- 1.3 Wider Opportunity

## **02. Site Photos**

## **03. Local Character**

## **04. Opportunities & Constraints**

## **05. Design Vision**

## **06. Framework Masterplan**

# 01. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Vision Document is to outline the process of appraisal and evaluation that has been undertaken in relation to the physical, social and planning context of the Site. This will be distilled into a clear, concise vision, to demonstrate how the Site can be sensitively progressed to accommodate sustainable residential development.

## 1.1 SITE LOCATION

The Site is being brought forward by Bellway Strategic Land and is located on the southern edge of Waterbeach Village in South Cambridgeshire, approximately 8 km north-east of Cambridge and on the edge of the Fens. Waterbeach is a historic settlement with Roman origins, characterised primarily by residential development and an industrial area. However, the settlement is due to experience a significant change over the coming years with the delivery of a large urban extension on the former Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield Site.

Waterbeach benefits from strong regional connectivity, positioned between the A10 to the west and the Cambridge–Ely railway line to the east. The existing railway station lies around 430 metres south of the Site, with frequent services to Cambridge, Ely, King’s Lynn, and London King’s Cross. A new station is currently under construction 2.4 km to the north to support the emerging urban extension, and is scheduled for completion in 2027.

In the 2011 census, Waterbeach’s population sat at 5,166 with a high proportion of those aged 20-40 and decreasing numbers across older ages. Waterbeach’s urban extension, designated in 2018 and planned to accommodate over 25,000 residents. This major development will significantly expand the settlement and establish Waterbeach as a key growth area within Cambridgeshire.



Figure 1:01 Urban extension Diagram

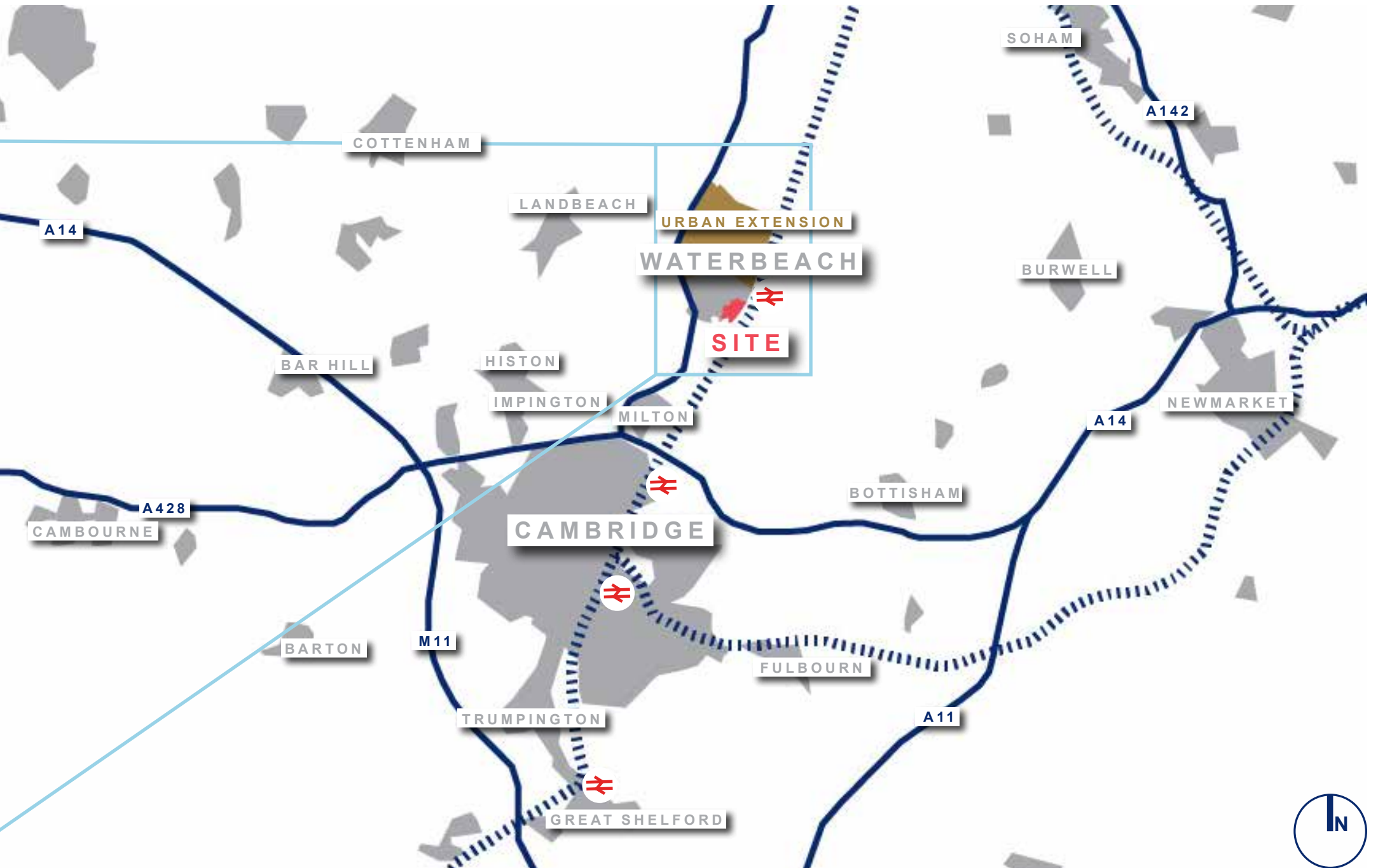


Figure 1:02 Wider Context Site Location

## 1.2 SITE CONTEXT

The Site is located to the east of Waterbeach village, approximately 8 km north-east of Cambridge. The eastern boundary is defined by the Cambridge–Ely railway line, with Waterbeach railway station currently situated around 430 metres south of the Site's southern edge. The Site fronts Bannold Road along the northern boundary and Burgess Road along the southern boundary, offering potential vehicular access. Key local amenities, including Waterbeach Primary School, the village library, GP surgery, and a convenience store, are all accessible via paved footpaths within 1 km of the Site.

Currently, the land comprises of a mix of agricultural fields, fallow areas, and pockets of woodland. Three fields along the northern boundary and two on the eastern edge are actively farmed, with the south-eastern parcel used for livestock grazing. The entire Site is classified as Grade 3 (moderate) agricultural land. The south-western section is fallow and adjoins a densely wooded area bordering Saberton Close.

Waterbeach's population in the 2011 census was 5,166 featuring a high proportion of people aged 20-40, decreasing through older age groups. This population is expected to subnstantially increase with the addition of the urban extension development in the North, raising population by upto 25,000 people.

*Bellway Homes plc is one of the UK's leading residential developers, established in 1946. From its origins as a family-run housebuilding firm in Newcastle upon Tyne, Bellway has grown into a FTSE 250 company, delivering high quality homes across England, Scotland, and Wales. Today, Bellway operates through a network of regional divisions, each focused on creating sustainable communities that reflect local character and meet modern living standards.*

**Bellway**



Figure 1:03 Aerial View



**WATERBEACH URBAN  
EXTENSION**

1km



CAMBRIDGE TO ELY  
RAILWAY LINE



BANNOLD ROAD



WATERBEACH



BURGESS ROAD

**SITE**



RIVER CAM

## 1.3 WIDER OPPORTUNITY

Land at Burgess Road presents a unique opportunity to shape a connected and sustainable neighbourhood that embraces both its heritage and future potential.

### LOCAL INTER-CONNECTIVITY

1

The Site represents a unique opportunity to create one cohesive development by linking the old and new settlements at Waterbeach, increasing urban permeability and access to the new train station due to open in 2027. The Site's access strategy, which will support active and sustainable movement, can align with the safeguarded route identified in the Neighbourhood plan.

### ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

2

Natural England categorises Waterbeach as a mix of L1 & M1 (Least/Moderate Scenario) on residents access to green space in the area. As such the Site offers a opportunity to provide a high quality public green space for residents. The encircled area represents an approximate 500m radius of the Site, showing how proposed public open space could serve the existing settlement.

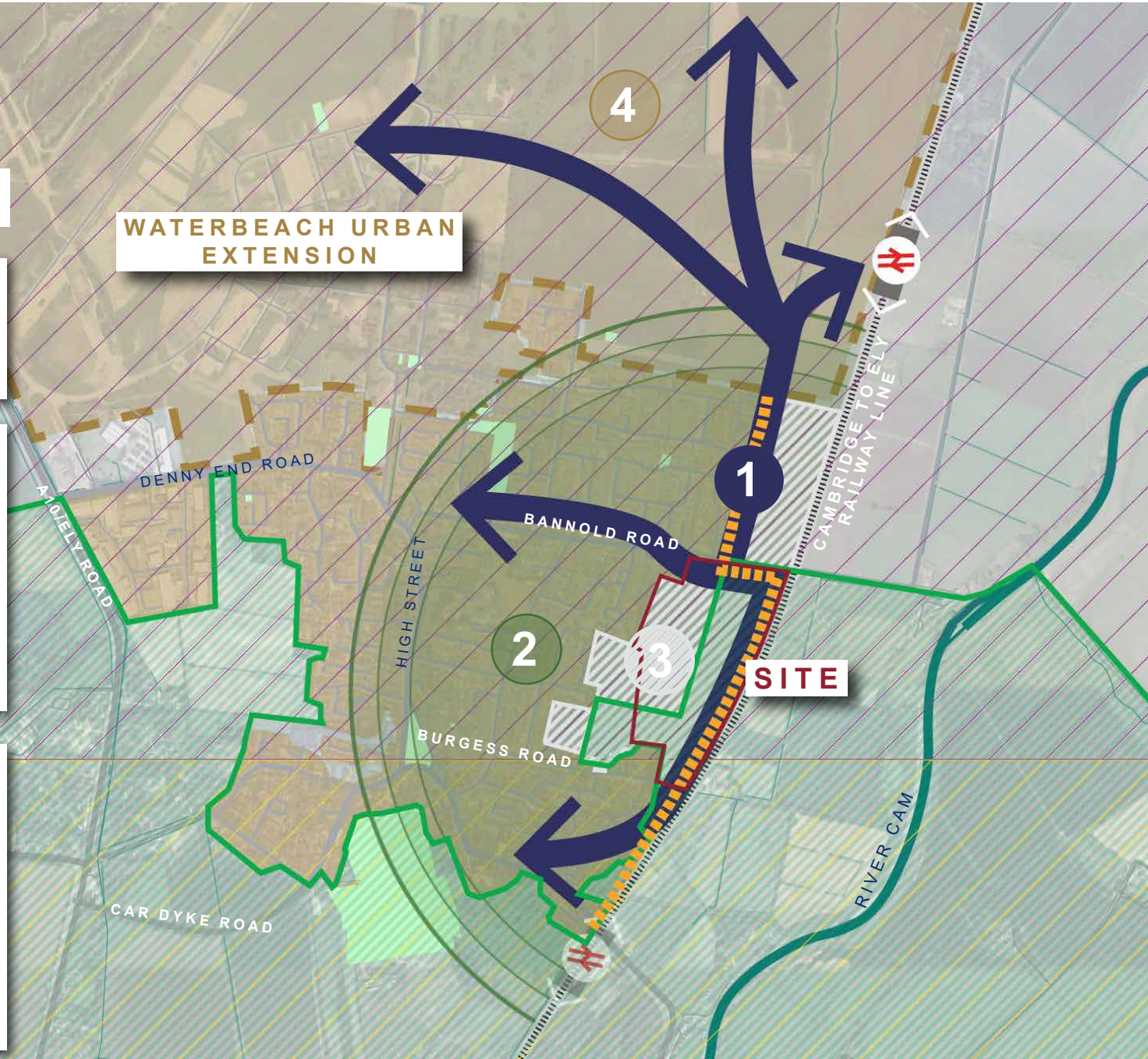
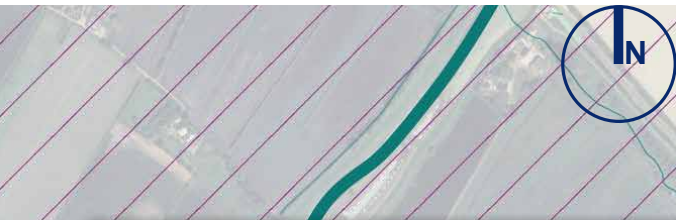


Figure 1:04 Wider Opportunity Diagram











### GREY BELT

3

A Landscape and Visual Study (LVS) has been produced for the Site, which identifies that the Site sits within the Green Belt as part of the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, August 2021). The LVS considers the parcels 'grey belt' under NPPF, as they do not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes and development would not impact statutory landscape designations or heritage assets. This creates an opportunity to sensitively develop the Site, opening access and amenity for the community.

### LEGEND

-  Site Boundary
-  Waterbeach Urban
-  Safeguarded route
-  Connectivity Opportunity
-  500m radius of green space opportunity
-  Potential for Grey Belt Consideration
-  L1 - Least Favourable Scenario
-  M2 - Moderate Scenario
-  Green Belt

### WATERBEACH'S URBAN EXTENSION

4

Waterbeach's urban extension is a major settlement, currently under construction, north of Waterbeach village in South Cambridgeshire, approved as part of the 2018 Local Plan. The development spans approximately 560 hectares and will deliver up to 11,000 homes.

The urban extension is an exciting opportunity for Waterbeach Village and the Site, as it lies at a key location for the integration of the two settlements. Placed along Waterbeach Village's eastern edge, nearby to the new train station, the Site can benefit from the substantial amenities and investment that will be taking place in the urban extension.

The urban extension will include over 35 hectares of open space, including a 20-acre country park, 24,800 sqm of employment space, retail, leisure, and community facilities. The scheme also delivers two primary schools, a secondary school, and a sixth-form centre, plus healthcare and sports facilities.

All these amenities will be accessible to the Site within a 2.5km radius. Furthermore, over £100 million has been committed to investing in local infrastructure prioritising sustainable living through placing pedestrians and cyclists ahead of cars. Creating substantial sustainable transportation opportunities for the Site.



Figure 1:05 Urban extension Diagram

# 02. SITE PHOTOS



Figure 2.1: Viewpoints Map



Figure 2.2; Viewpoint 1 - View looking into the Site from the southeastern corner of Site along Burgess Road



Figure 2.3; Viewpoint 2 - View from Bannold Road and Bannold Drive looking south into the Site.



Figure 2.4; Viewpoint 3 - View from the junction of Bannold Road and Long Drive.



Figure 2.5; Viewpoint 4 - View from The Fen's Way PRoW which runs along both sides of the River Cam.



Figure 2.6; Viewpoint 5 - View from PRoW the Fen's Way to the east of the Site.

# 03. LOCAL CHARACTER

Waterbeach's built form contains 3 distinct character areas;

## WATERBEACH VILLAGE

- Contains a rich mix of historic houses and architectural styles, with this prevalent around Green Side and the central village green.
- Built form is typified by small plots, with limited set backs resulting in the creation of strong, active streetscene. This direct interaction with the streets and public realm creates a strong sense of place, but limits opportunity for planted boundaries, off street parking, and other features that demarcate public/private edges.

## THE URBAN EDGE

- These urban areas act as a transitional zone, where historic village qualities meet rural surroundings.
- Mainly comprised of more modern residential developments, with a more uniform application of material palettes and a housing mix (terraces and semi-detached) which reflects a growing community.

## WATERBEACH'S URBAN EXTENSION

- The urban extension in Waterbeach is characterised by landscape led higher density modern residential areas with areas of green space and play woven throughout the development.
- Terraced houses and mid-rise flats with minimal set backs and varied materials across the development.



Figure 3.1: Waterbeach Village Character Area



Figure 3.2: The Urban Edge Character Area



Figure 3.3: The Urban extension Character Area

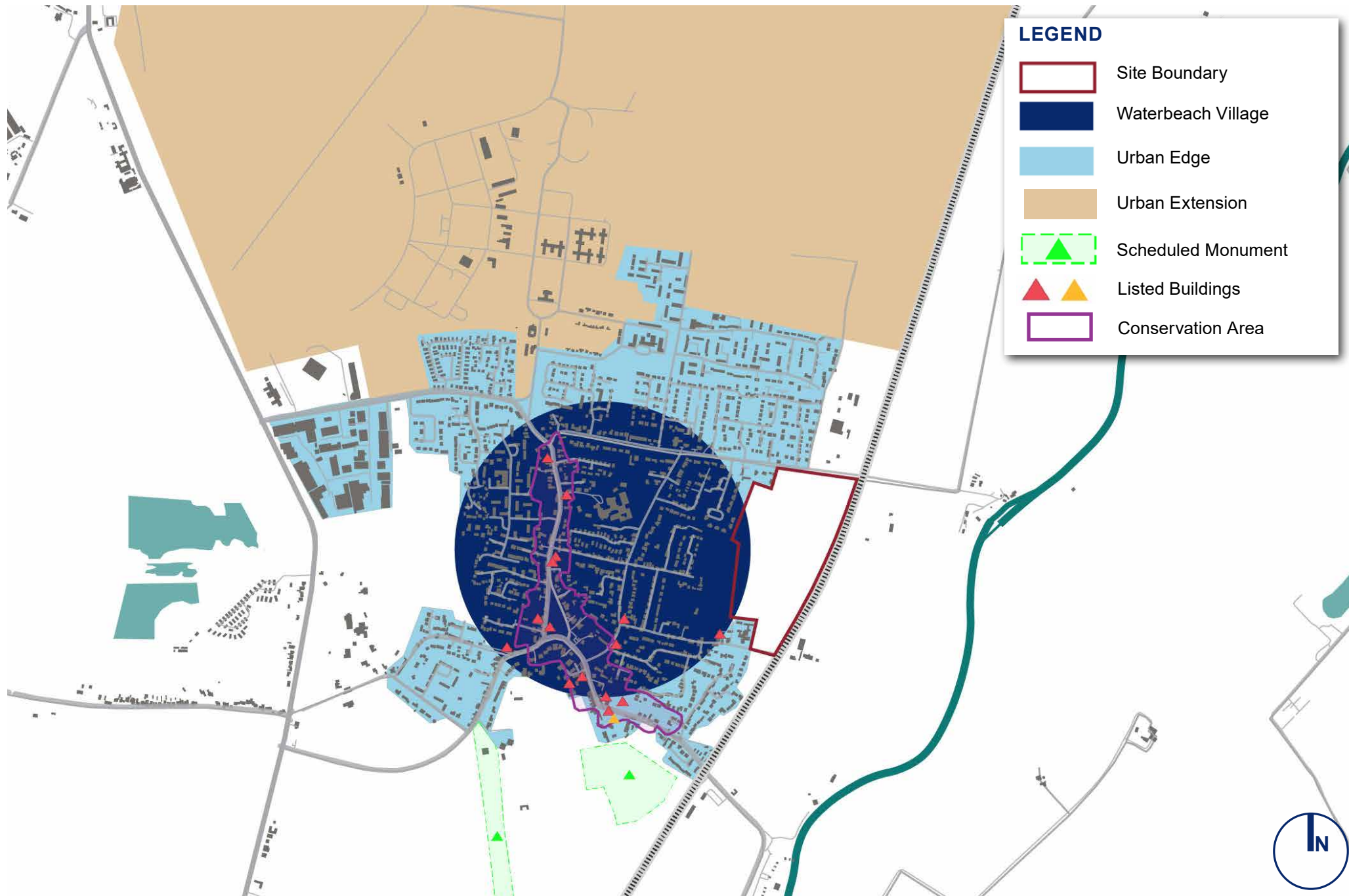











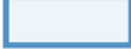







Figure 3.4: Character Areas Graphic

# 04. OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Through the process of a desktop investigation, a number of Opportunities and Constraints have been identified which provide a framework within which the proposed development will be brought forward.

The proposed development presents an opportunity to create a considerate, sustainable, and well designed scheme. It aims to deliver a mix of house types and tenures within a well-connected urban setting, while respecting the surrounding landscape. By making efficient use of land, the scheme can generate substantial benefits for the local community, sensitively adding to Waterbeach's existing built form character and addressing identified housing needs.

## LEGEND

	Site Boundary		Scheduled monument
	Primary Access		Waterbeach Urban extension
	Secondary Access		Sensitive boundary
	Movement opportunity		Bus Stop
	Public Right of Way		Flood Zone 2
	Railway		Flood Zone 3
	Conservation Area		Surface water 1 in a 1000 year event
	Listed Building Grade II		Green Belt
	Listed Building Grade II*		

## LANDSCAPE INFLUENCE

- Influence from The Fens, large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons with a strong sense of place, tranquillity and inspiration.
- Meadows and fenland, rich in biodiversity with diverse habitats like woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands, inspired by the nearby River Cam
- Landscape led approach, preserving existing planting and historic field boundaries where possible

## URBAN INFLUENCE

- Influence from the existing built form of Waterbeach village with traditional street enclosure, continuous frontages
- Architectural influence taken from Historic Conservation Area and Listed buildings
- Organic street layout that follow landscape boundaries
- Creating a space that is cohesive with Waterbeach village and complementary to Waterbeach's urban extension

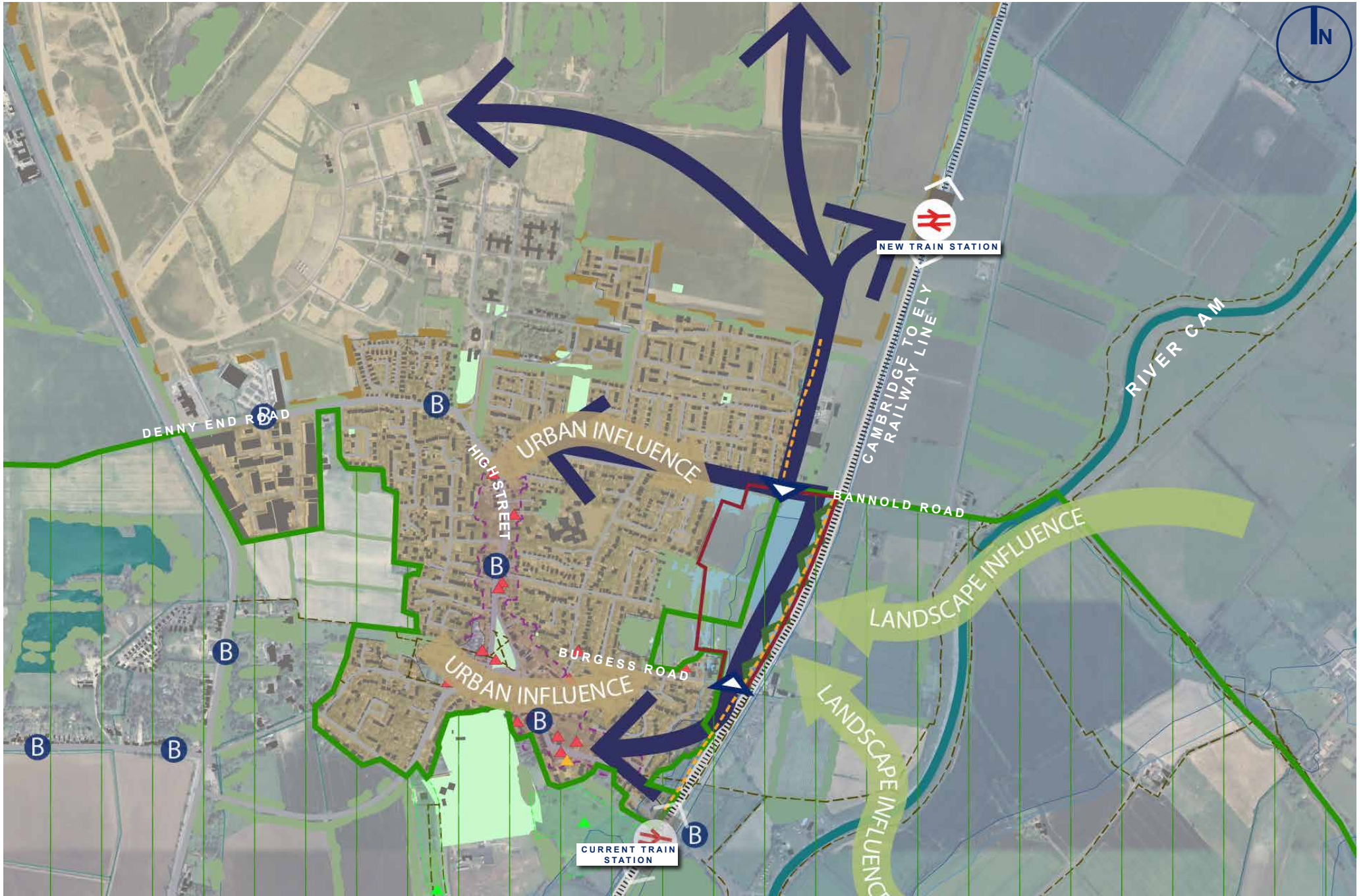


Figure 4:01 Design Considerations Diagram

## LAND USES

The Site has historically been used for Agricultural use and was partially Fennland (Fig 3:03). The land is currently being used for agricultural uses.

The Site offers a strategic *opportunity* to redefine the urban edge of Waterbeach Village through thoughtful built form and integrated green spaces, delivering new amenity and strengthening community connections. This would include the creation of a distinctive green gateway that connects the village to Waterbeach's urban extension, via an active travel corridor through the Fenland landscape. This would incorporate the proposed 'Safeguarded Route' highlighted in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Site presents an *opportunity* to accommodate sustainable residential growth in a contained and well-defined location, easing pressure on surrounding land of agricultural and ecological value while maintaining the physical separation between settlements.

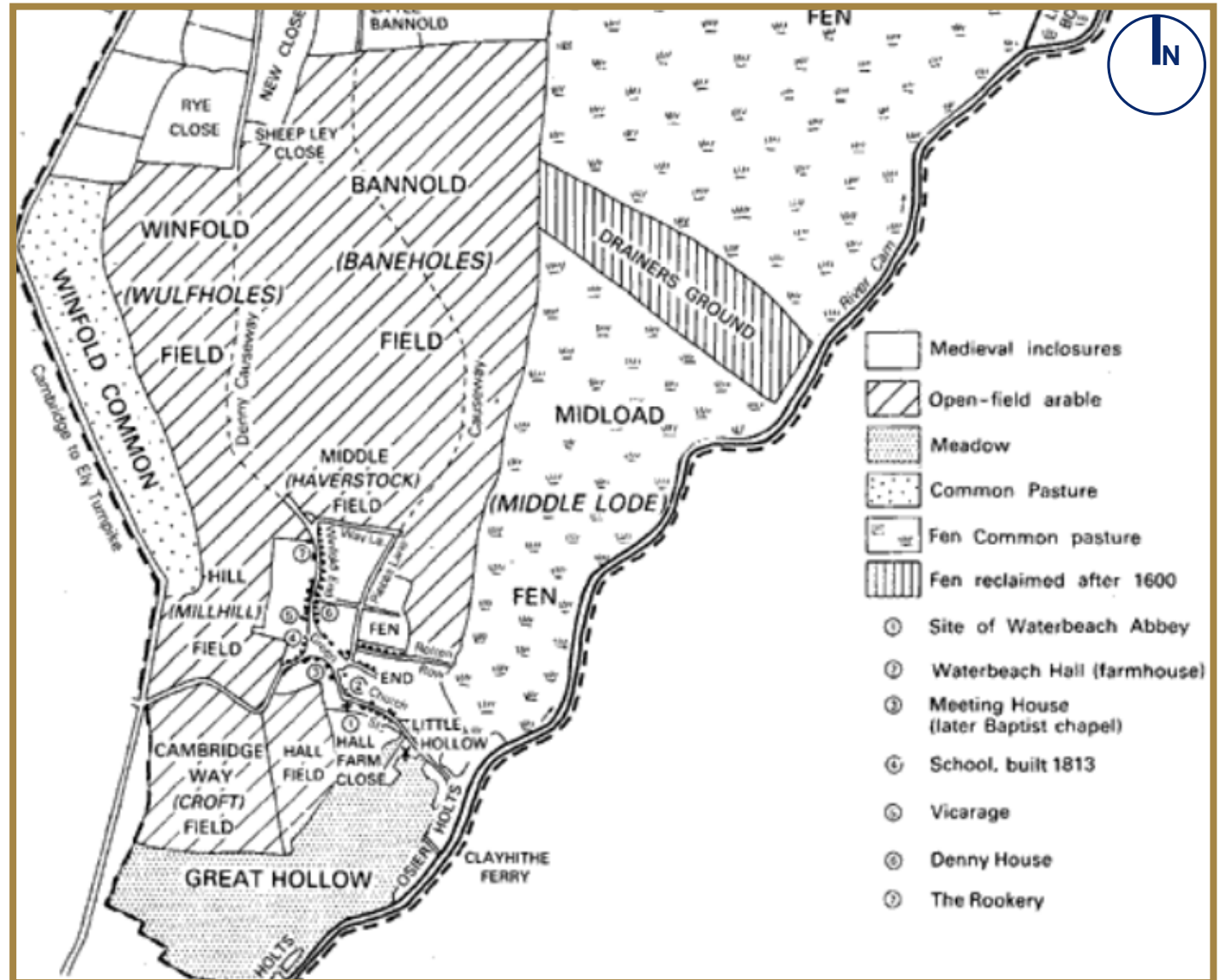


Figure 4:02 1810 Map of Waterbeach

## HERITAGE

The Site's proximity to the historic heart of Waterbeach presents an **opportunity** for the proposed development to draw inspiration from the village's rich heritage, using considered urban form and architecture to reflect its established character and reinforce a strong sense of place, ensuring the new neighbourhood feels intrinsically connected to Waterbeach.

## DENSITY

The Site's proximity to the 'well connected' Waterbeach railway station presents a clear **opportunity** to deliver an efficient, transit-oriented form of development. Informed by the updated NPPF density guidance, the masterplan will optimise land use within the developable area to support sustainable travel patterns and a compact, well-designed neighbourhood.

## FLOOD RISK DRAINAGE

The eastern section of the Site lies within areas of Flood Zone 1 and 2, as well as areas of surface water flooding at risk during a 1 in 1000 year event in the western side of the Site. This **constrains** developable area in these locations.

But these areas provide the **opportunity** to reimagine green infrastructure as a defining feature of the development. By integrating multifunctional SuDS, high-quality amenity spaces, and green corridors, the masterplan can strengthen ecological value, connect communities, and create an attractive, resilient landscape that complements the surrounding Fenland context.

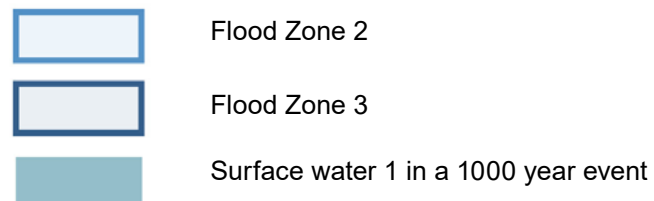


Figure 4:03 Flood Risk Diagram

## WATERBEACH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Waterbeach's 2022 Neighbourhood plan identifies a safeguarded route running from the present location of Waterbeach train station to its new location, due to open in 2027. This route runs directly through the Site in a north-south direction and aligns well with the movement opportunity identified in the strategic vision diagram. The route is safeguarded as a separate pedestrian and cycle route and is currently not funded. This is a substantial **opportunity** for the Site to deliver a scheme that realises this important active transportation corridor.



## TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of the Site gently slopes from up to 8m above sea level in the east to as low as 3m above sea level in the west. Planting and landscaping will be used to mitigate the changes in views from the west of the Site with a similar approach being taken to the eastern border of the railway line along the Site's boundary.

----- Safeguarded route



Topography contour lines

Figure 4:04 Neighbourhood Plan Safeguarded Route Diagram

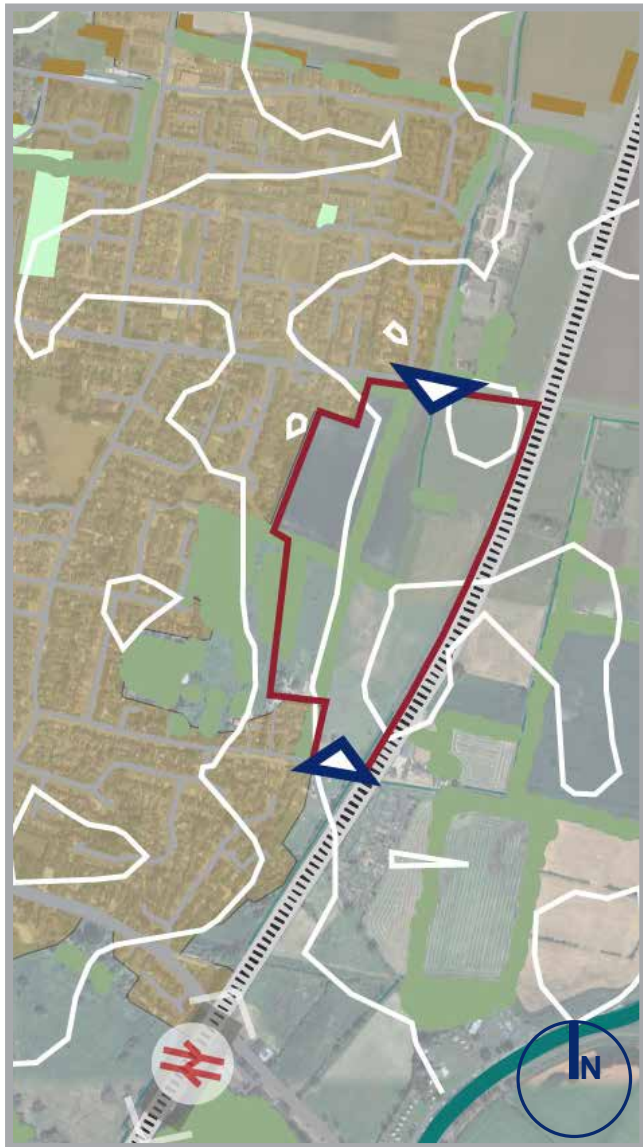


Figure 4:05 Topography Diagram

## VEGETATION

Boundaries of the Site are made up of established hedgerow alongside internal field boundaries. There are also sparse clusters of trees in the hedgerow across the Site with a range of species, maturities and conditions. Historically these have stayed consistent, providing familiar structure and form to the landscape. There will be a key **opportunity** to preserve and strengthen these boundaries, allowing them to continue to serve as key historical and ecological corridors. There is more dense tree cover and scrub in the central south field that is not currently being cultivated. there is an **opportunity** to enhance these more heavily planted areas and better integrating them into the surrounding landscape, supporting the local ecological network.



Existing Vegetation

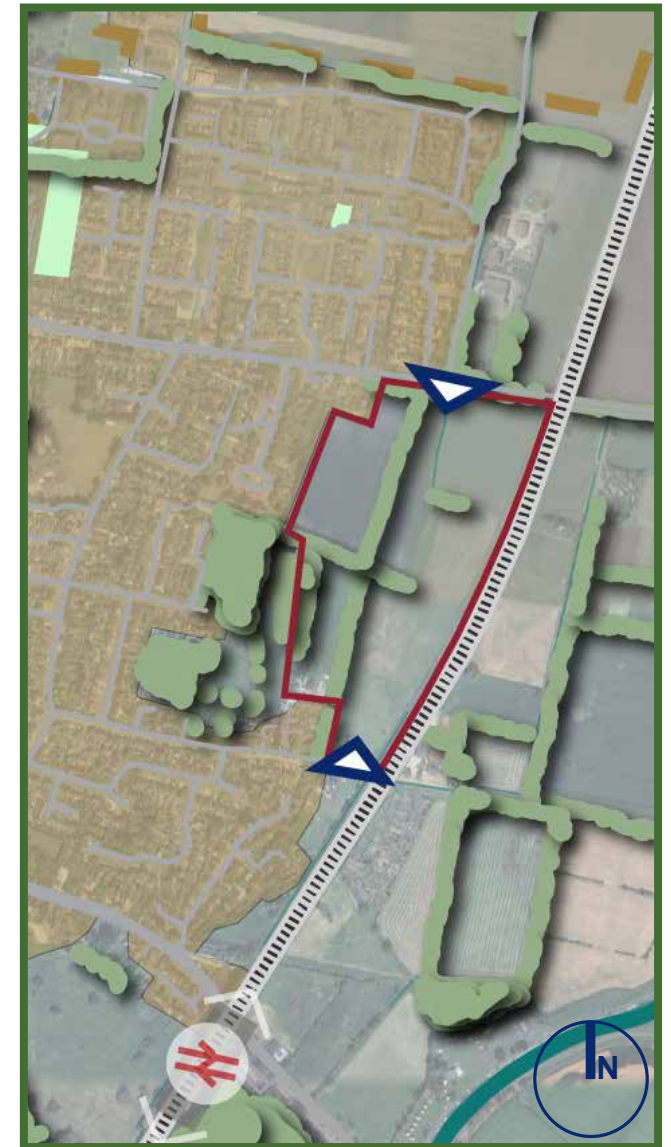


Figure 4:06 Vegetation Diagram

# LANDSCAPE VISUAL STUDY



A Landscape and Visual Study (LVS) was carried out by Bidwells in Jan 2025 to evaluate the Site off Burgess Road, Waterbeach. The findings are summarised as follows:

## GREEN BELT

- Parcel WA1: Low-harm release opportunity; limited openness and fits existing settlement pattern.
- Parcel WA2: Moderate-harm constraint; release narrows gap to nearby villages like Lode.

Recommendation: Focus development on western edge and keep a landscape buffer. This **constrains** development to some extent, the west of the Site presents an **opportunity** to deliver a high quality integrated green space that softens the border of development and enhances ecological networks.

## VISUAL CHARACTER

- Flat, open Fens offer big skies and wide views.
- Site is highly visible from roads and Fen's Way due to lack of screening which will **constrain** the form of development.
- **Opportunity** to design appropriate low rise development where buildings avoid breaking the skyline or harming the setting's rural remoteness.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & ECOLOGY












- **Opportunity** identified to create a blue-green corridor for habitats and carbon capture.
- Flood resilience requires SuDS and protection of marshes along River Cam, this is also an **opportunity** to deliver a high quality multifunctional SuDS scheme that will reduce flood risk while providing amenity for residents and wildlife existing in the space.

## DESIGN & TRANQUILLITY

- There is an **opportunity** reinforce historic character by filling hedgerow gaps for soft transitions.
- The Site is **constrained** by noise from Cambridge-Ely railway there is an **opportunity** to use planting to reduce acoustic impact.

The study concludes that although development will alter the Site's rural landscape, strategic mitigation can manage visual effects on residents and Public Right of Way (PRoW) users.

## LEGEND

-  Railway to the east of Site
-  Boundary with existing dwellings, with little or no view into the Site
-  Areas not suitable for development
-  Area believed to be acceptable for low impact development or open space is suitable
-  Areas believed to be acceptable for development
-  Area has little visibility from surrounding public areas, therefore suitable for development, providing existing screening it retained.
-  Key view into Site
-  Parcel WA1 - Low Harm
-  Parcel WA2 - Medium Harm
-  Existing vegetation on Site
-  Proposed Green Links between Site and surrounding countryside
-  Potential vehicular access into Site
-  Potential emergency vehicle and pedestrian access into Site

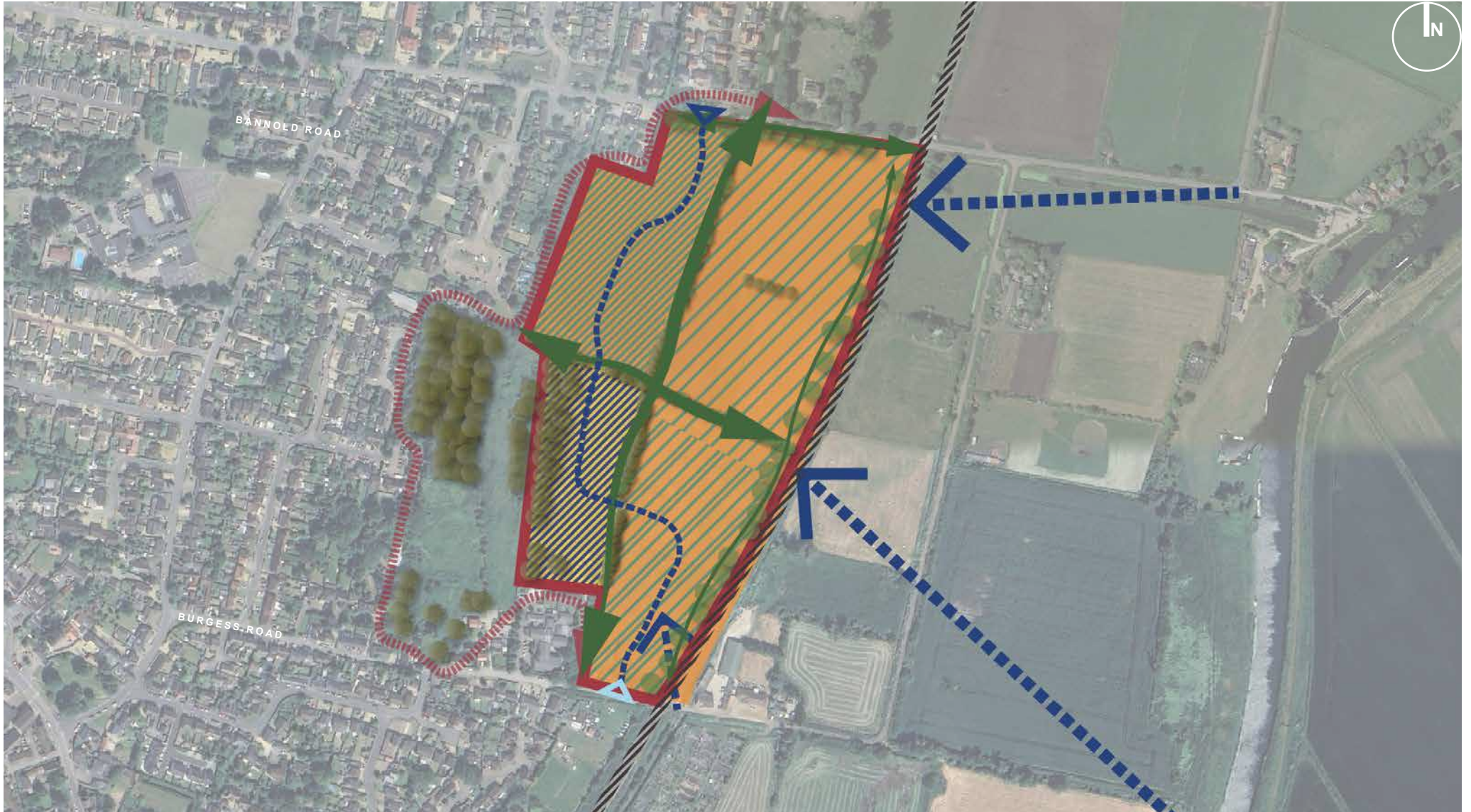


Figure 4:07 Landscape and Visual Study Diagram

# 05. OUR VISION

***Land South of Bannold Road, Waterbeach presents a unique opportunity to create a high-quality new neighbourhood within a well connected setting.***

***The scheme will combine outdoor recreation spaces with a key active travel corridor, delivering a sustainable residential development that integrates seamlessly with Waterbeach's existing built form and character. This approach will encourage connections with the existing community while offering significant opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain. Our vision goes beyond compliance, aiming to implement strategic ecological enhancements that contribute to a wider biodiversity strategy.***

## LANDSCAPE LED

By prioritising a landscape-led approach, the development will protect and enhance existing vegetation while strengthening ecological networks across the wider landscape. Carefully designed green spaces will deliver recreation, play, and amenity for the community, creating measurable Biodiversity Net Gain and a resilient, nature-rich environment.

## CONNECTION FOCUSED

The development will weave seamlessly into Waterbeach's urban and landscape fabric, strengthening links between the Village and the urban extension. Through a green gateway, enhanced active travel routes, and thoughtfully placed public amenities, it will foster accessibility, connectivity, and a vibrant, community-focused environment for current and future residents.

## DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE HOUSING GROWTH

The Site will help meet local housing needs early in the Local Plan period, delivering a mix of sustainable homes that support existing and planned community facilities. Development will respond sensitively to its historic surroundings, reflecting local character and enhancing Waterbeach's sense of place and identity.



Figure 5:01 Vision Aerial

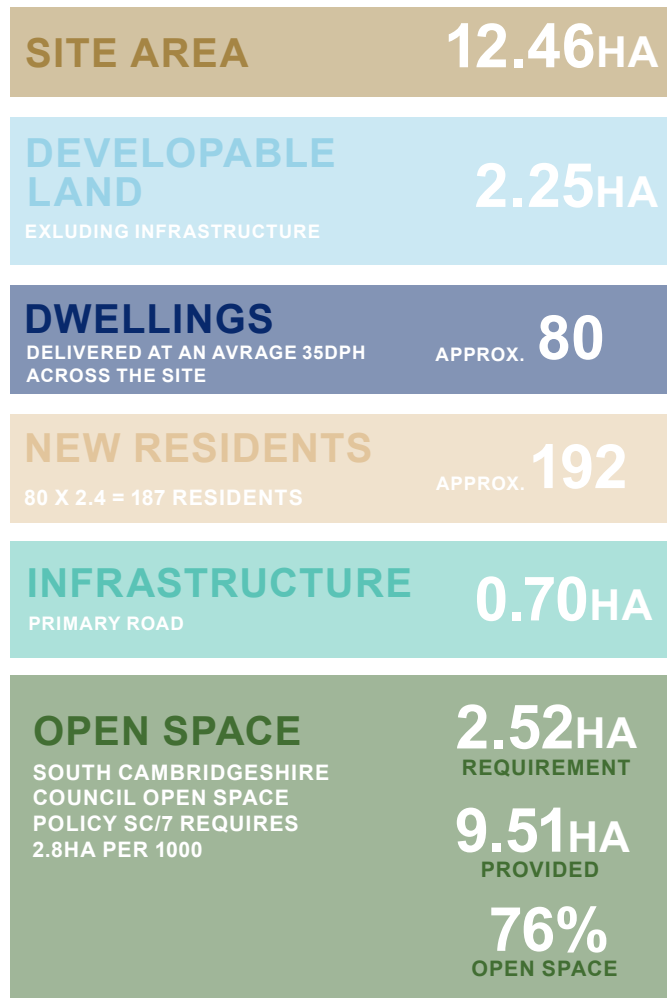
# 06. FRAMEWORK MASTERPLAN

Following a detailed desktop investigation, a number of constraints and opportunities were identified, which have underpinned the creation of the Framework Masterplan. This plan is inherently landscape-led, designed to respond sensitively to the existing Site characteristics and surrounding context.

The Site offers the opportunity to deliver a high-quality, sustainable development of ~78 new homes, thoughtfully integrated within a generous and publicly accessible green landscape of approximately 12.46 hectares less than 1km away from Waterbeach's historic centre, 0.5km away from the existing train station and 0.65km away from the new station location.

The Framework Priorities:

Enhanced connectivity, sustainability, and community amenity. The identified development plots are embedded within a substantial wider network of green infrastructure, creating high-quality, accessible spaces for both existing and future Waterbeach residents. This network supports biodiversity by strengthening local ecological corridors, while also delivering a key active travel route that connects the new urban extension with Waterbeach's historic core, promoting sustainable and healthy travel choices for future and existing residents.



## LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Proposed developable land
- Frontages
- SuDS
- Existing Bus Stop
- Primary Access
- Play area
- Primary road
- Secondary Road
- Active transportation link / Emergency access
- Greenway
- Proposed Cycle Paths
- Proposed Footpath
- Proposed Informal Footpath
- Existing Vegetation
- Proposed Vegetation
- Area of Fenland Inspired Planting



Figure 6:01 Framework Masterplan

## BUILT FORM CHARACTER



Figure 6:03 Meadow Character Area Imagery

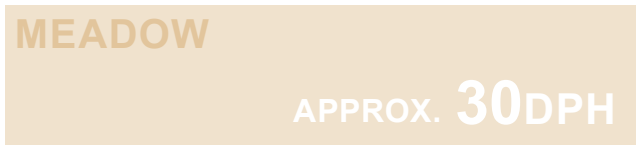


Figure 6:02 Character Area Masterplan

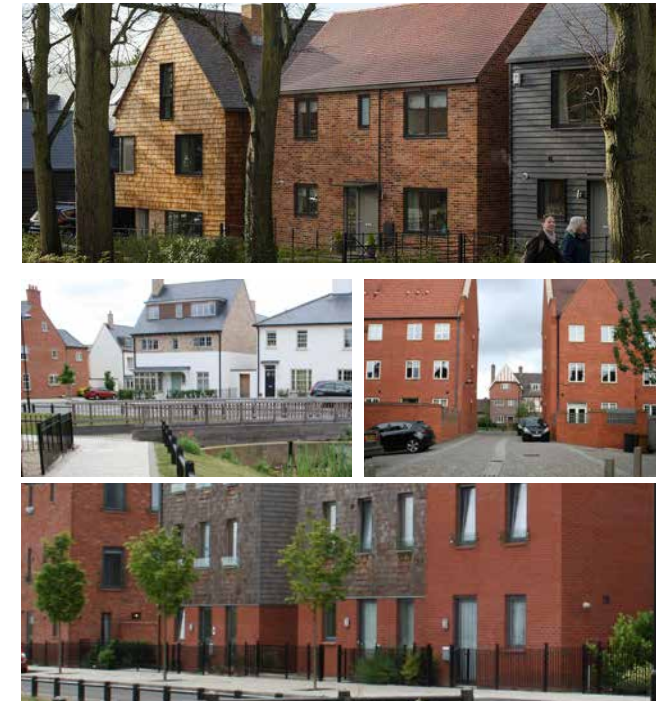


Figure 6:04 Woodland Hamlet Character Area Imagery



- The Site's existing 'meadow', defined by wet hollows, mown areas, tussocky areas with views of tree belts will inform the built form and surrounding green space.
- To reflect a considered approach to natural boundaries and to preserve key vistas through the development, the Meadow will be carefully aligned with existing landscape features. This approach creates opportunities for natural surveillance, complemented by varied building set backs and integrated planting that reinforce landscape character and spatial quality.
- The adjacent landscaping will utilise native species throughout, creating rich grassland interspersed with wildflower, scattered trees and hedgerows.



- The Site will respond to the built areas to the west and north, with the wooded area along the eastern boundary informed by the more permeable character of the 'Woodland Hamlet'.
- The built form will encourage community interaction through higher density, drawing woodland hamlet influences into the Site via street trees and built forms reflective of Waterbeach's historic centre in key details.
- The 'Woodland Hamlet' character will also be reflected in open space, with a mosaic of native trees and shrubs complementing a multifunctional network of swales and SuDS features.

## GREEN SPACE CHARACTER

### FENLAND

The Site lies within the Fenland National Character Area, a distinctive, historic and human influenced wetland landscape. The area is notable for its large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons which convey a strong sense of place, tranquillity and inspiration.

This landscape context has influenced the design of the framework plan with several identified areas that will be planted with Fenland Inspired planting characterised by species rich meadows, Reedbeds, Sedge lined edges and areas of wet woodland. Examples can be seen below.



Figure 6:05 Fenland Character Imagery







-  Play area
-  SuDS
-  Proposed Vegetation
-  Area of Fenland inspired Planting

Figure 6:06 Landscape Character Area Masterplan

### THE RIVER CAM

The River Cam runs 400m to the east of the Site and will provide some landscape influence across the site. The river is characterised by low-lying, flat, and open terrain, transnational from rural, willow-lined banks to the iconic punting and collage views in central Cambridge.

### SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE

A integrated and multifunctional drainage approach has been implemented in this framework plan. The areas identifies for SuDS (Sustainable urban Drainage Solutions) are outside of flood zones or surface water risk areas, allowing for effective attenuation while also creating areas that enhance biodiversity and add to the attractive landscape of the Site.



Figure 6:06 SuDS Imagery

Bidwell House,  
Trumpington Road,  
Cambridge  
CB2 9LD

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